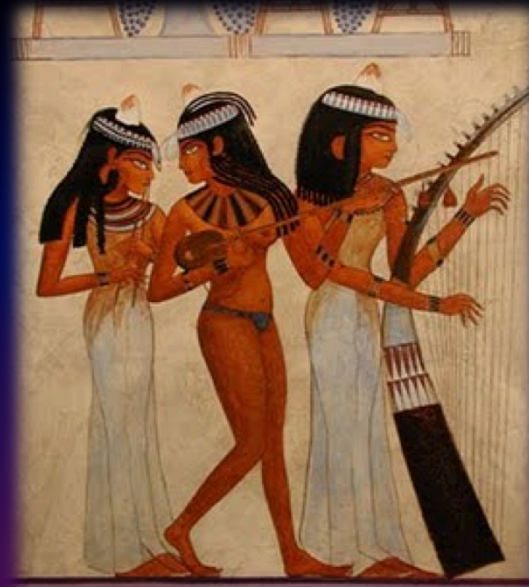


Women in Ancient Egypt






Cleopatra – Beauty and Brains!

- This is a clip from the 1963 movie ‘Cleopatra’.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HfYnsSWMAAs>






Let's Discuss!

- How is the demeanour of Cleopatra portrayed in this clip?
 - Why do you think the traditional beliefs about Cleopatra focus on her beauty, rather than on her personality and intelligence?
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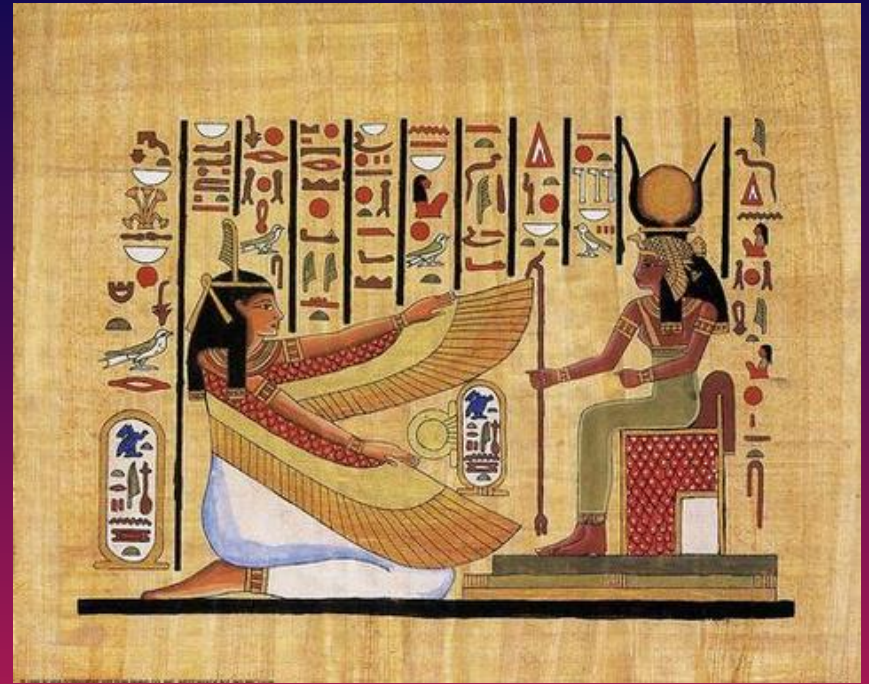


Let's Discuss!

- What are the problems a woman would have had in being a leader during Cleopatra's time?
 - Cleopatra's power was represented through her beauty and sexuality. Is this present in today's society? Not necessarily politics and government per se but what about music, movies and television? Think about female advertisements and the attention they attract.
- 

Women in Ancient Egypt

- Women were well treated
- They enjoyed a considerable amount of legal rights compared with women in other ancient civilizations
- Equal to men
- Faced nearly no resistance in society





Women's Legal Rights

- Women shared the same legal rights as men
- Women could:
 - Free slaves
 - Make adoptions
 - Seek a divorce
 - Initiate a court case; serve as a witness

These rights enabled a woman in Egyptian society to become more independent





Legal Rights Regarding Women

- Women were equal in the court system
- Could act as a witness, plaintiff or defendant
- Women were accountable for the crimes they committed
- If found guilty, they would suffer the same punishments as their male counterparts






Key Questions Regarding Legal Rights

- Do you find these legal rights for women surprising? Why or why not?
- Vote: Do you think it was fair for women to receive the same punishments as men if found guilty for a crime?





Economic Rights as a Woman

- A woman could own property in her own name
 - She could hold professions that allowed her to have economic freedom from her husband
 - A wife was entitled one third of property that she owned jointly with her husband
 - On her death, she could will her property to anyone she wished
- 

Roles in Society

- Review!
 - Describe roles in Egyptian society where women exercise some authority/power.
- Brainstorm!
 - Describe roles in Egyptian society where women exercise little authority/power.
 - Describe the types of work women could engage in Egyptian society.



Political Roles of an Egyptian Woman

- Only men were allowed to work in the government
- Women did not have much opportunity politically
 - they did not hold important titles
 - Woman had little political power
 - usually illiterate, uneducated
 - barred from intellectual and government life





Women and the Domestic Sphere

- Primary social role revolved around the domestic sphere
- The home was the wife's domain
- The common title for a married Ancient Egyptian woman was "*nebet per*" which meant "lady of the house"
- Aside from running the household, their main function in society was to bear and raise children





Transparency 3.2E

Egyptian women at home with children



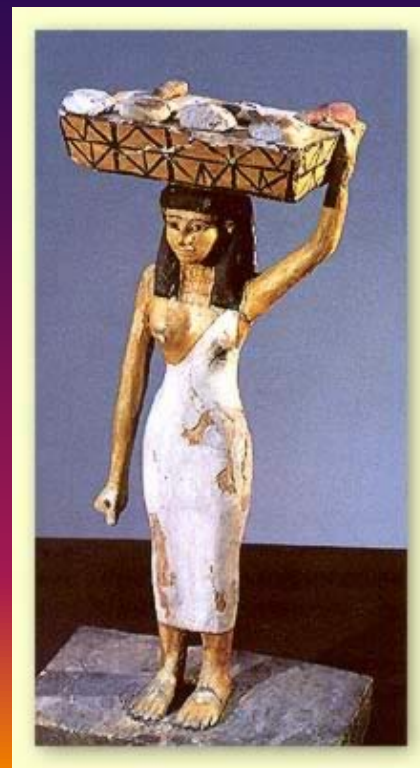
Social Roles Regarding Women

- In society, women faced few restrictions in public
 - i.e. When visiting the market, they were not required to wear any covering over their faces
- Most of the time, women stayed at home baking bread, brewing beer and preparing offerings for the dead
- They were either pregnant or raising children which gave them less time to work outside





A woman carrying a
basket of food and
goods



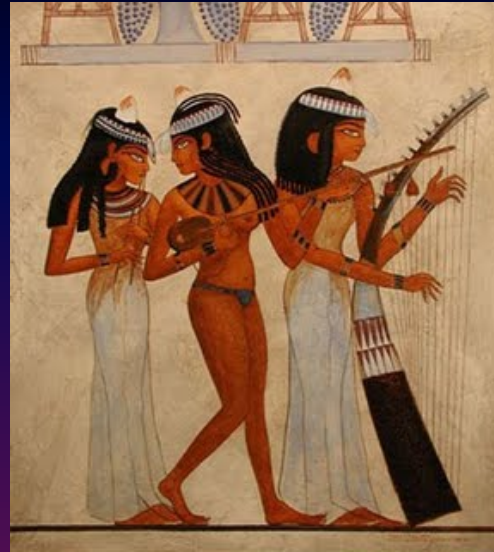
Women making
bread or brewing
wine, these took
place within the
domestic household
most of the time



Occupations of a Woman

- Few career opportunities
- Working outside of the home was frowned upon.
- They were not likely to be as educated as men
- Tombs depict women at various occupations such as singers, musicians, dancers, servants, beer brewers, bakers, professional mourners, priestesses and the loyal loving wife.





Women as entertainers; one of the few professions that enabled a woman to be active in society





Occupations of a Woman

- Upper class women could have held a position in office and they might have executed real jobs
- Outside the royal family, few women took paid jobs
- Some wives helped their husbands with farm work while others weaved for extra money






Egyptian woman helping her husband
work the fields for harvesting crops

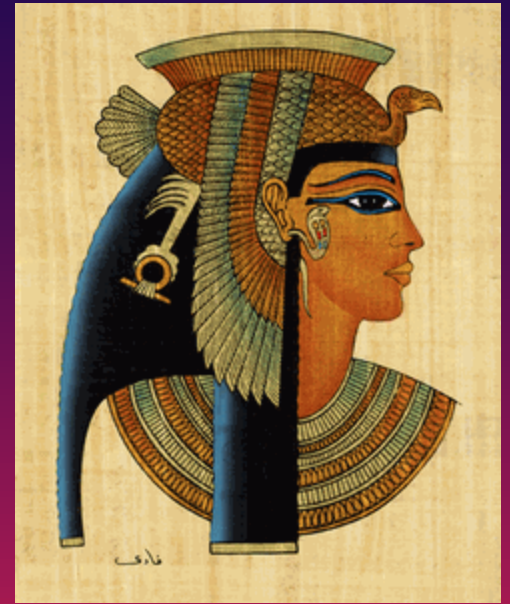


Powerful Egyptian Women

- Cleopatra
 - Hatshepsut
 - Queen Nefertiti
 - These women ruled Egypt at some point, changing several factors regarding trade, religion, etc...
 - Cleopatra and Queen Nefertiti are regarded as two of the most beautiful women who are respected as popular figures in Western culture
- 

Cleopatra

- Last effective pharaoh of Egypt's Ptolemaic dynasty
- Ruled Egypt from 51 BCE
- Death: around 31 BCE, several sources include:
 - a) she induced an Egyptian cobra to bite her
 - b) she applied a toxic ointment
 - c) she was bitten by an asp



Hatshepsut

- 5th pharaoh of the 18th century of Egypt – one of the most successful
- Reigned for nearly 22 years
- She was successful in warfare, established trading relationships, brought great wealth to Egypt
- Death: January 16 1458 BCE



Queen Nefertiti

- Royal wife of Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten
- Known for changing Egypt's religion from polytheistic to henotheistic
- Around 14th year of Akhenaten's rule, she vanished from historical records
- Death: no evidence found of her death, body or burial



Activity!

- So you've heard about economic , social and political roles that women were engaged in Egyptian society, as a group compare the above roles with Egyptian women versus Canadian women in contemporary society.
- <http://www.markville.ss.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/history/16th/womenegypt.html>
- Be prepared to discuss your answers with the rest of the class!